

## What would you say?

*“My boyfriend is really nice to me when we’re alone, but when we’re around other people he puts me down.”*

- Your partner humiliating you or putting you down is a sign that you are in an unhealthy relationship.
- Consider that, while it seems important to have a boyfriend, it is far more important to take care of yourself and to have healthy relationships.

*“I think my girlfriend wants to have sex but I’m not ready. I’m scared to talk to her about it, because she might break up with me.”*

- If you do not feel ready for sex, do not do it. If you are afraid to talk to your partner about sex, you are not ready to have sex.
- No one should feel pressured by their partner to engage in sexual activity.
- You and your partner should communicate your boundaries and sexual limits.
- Sexual activity must only occur when consent is freely given (i.e. not pressured, manipulated, or otherwise coerced).
- If you are afraid to talk about your feelings with your partner because they might break up with you, this is a sign that you may be in an unhealthy relationship.

*“It seems like everyone is having sex, but I’m just not ready. My friends talk about it and keep pushing to know how far I’ve gone. I don’t want them to make fun of me.”*

- A person should only engage in sexual activity when they are ready.
- It is normal to want to fit in, but the decision to have sex cannot be taken lightly – it is a serious decision that each person must make for him- or herself.
- Consider changing the subject when your friends are discussing sex.
- Or, just be honest with your friends – let them know you are not ready for sex yet.

*“My boyfriend always gets mad at me for checking his phone and his social media. If he doesn’t have anything to hide, then why should it matter that I’m looking at his phone?”*

- Checking a partner’s phone, instant messages, or other communication shows a lack of trust, and is a sign of an unhealthy relationship.

- Wanting privacy and respect for one's own property does not necessarily mean that the person has something to hide.
- If you do trust your boyfriend, then respect his wishes and stop checking his phone.
- If you do not trust your boyfriend, then you are not in a healthy relationship.

*“My best friend used to be fun and social, but ever since she started going out with Sam, she’s changed. Lately she is quiet and grumpy, and she doesn’t hang out with friends anymore. I told her I was concerned and she said that I’m just jealous and that I don’t get it because I’m single.”*

- It sounds like your friend is not happy. It is possible that she is in an unhealthy relationship.
- You did the right thing sharing your feelings with her.
- If you are concerned that she is in an unhealthy or even abusive relationship, talk to a trusted adult.

*“Ashley is always flirting with me. My friend said that means she wants me because of how I dress. Now I’m really looking forward to the party on Saturday and hope we hook up.”*

- Flirting and dressing a certain way does not mean that Ashley wants to have sex with you.
- It can be very hurtful when people make assumptions about a person based on the way they dress.
- The way someone dresses or behaves is not consent or an invitation for sexual activity.
- The only way you and Ashley can consent to sex is by talking about it directly.
- Remember, consent must be freely given at every stage of sexual activity, and it must be given every time.

*“A few of my friends have been gossiping about me. They said that I’m looking for attention because I’m a girl and I’m friends with a lot of people who are boys.”*

- People are allowed to be friends with whomever they want. Just because a girl has a lot of guys friends, it doesn’t mean they are looking for attention. Some people get along better with others.
- Try talking to your friends about how their gossiping makes you feel and ask them to stop.

- If you do not feel comfortable talking to your friends about it, or if they continue even after you talk to them, talk to a trusted adult or teacher about your concerns.

*“My boyfriend and I were making out and suddenly I felt like things were moving too quickly. When I asked him to stop, he got angry and said I was sending mixed signals. Now he’s ignoring my texts and I heard he’s been talking to someone I know has a crush on him.”*

- You did the right thing asking your boyfriend to stop as soon as you felt uncomfortable.
- Consent must be freely given and can be withdrawn at any time.
- Sexual coercion (encouraging/manipulating/convincing someone to have sex when they do not want to) is a serious issue with dangerous consequences.
- If you feel your boyfriend is trying to manipulate or encourage you to engage in sexual activity when you are not ready, talk to a trusted adult.

*“My friend and I both like Jesse. Now whenever Jesse is around, my friend starts showing off or putting me down.”*

- It sounds like your friend is trying to look better by humiliating you.
- Do not respond by doing the same thing to your friend. Be the bigger person and do what you know is right.
- Talk to your friend about how this behaviour makes you feel.
- Remember: It is important that all our relationships be healthy, not just the romantic relationships, but friendships too!
- If your friend continues with these unhealthy behaviours, consider finding new friends.